

Tenant Action News

Serving Tenants in the Greater Newark Area

Vol. 10 No. 1

Spring 2001



Affordable Housing: *Going, Going, Gone?*

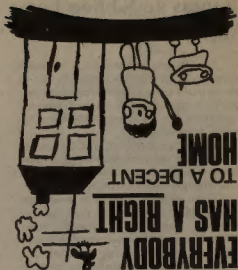
Demolition of Hill Manor, Story P. 5



? Habla Español?

Información acerca de sus derechos legales como inquilinos está disponible en español. Para recibir este material y noticias acerca de nuestras reuniones y talleres para inquilinos, llame al (973) 344-7210.

Mire a la páginas 14 - 19 para los artículos en español acerca sus derechos como inquilinos.



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*"Together we can move
mountains. Alone, we can't move
at all."*

Around Town

Editor's Note: These updates are based on interviews with representatives from the buildings at the time of publication.

St. James Towers Apartments

The St. James Towers Tenants Association has been extremely active, and the number of activities going on at the building has grown.

The "Golden Oldies" is a group which runs trips and activities for residents 50 years and older. They have gone to Lancaster, Pennsylvania, South St. Seaport in New York City, and elsewhere.

The free daily lunch and breakfast program continues for children every day, coordinated by Mrs. Brooks, a founder of the Tenants Association.

An annual St. James Towers Cook Out is held, at which food and music rule the day.

The St. James 440 Stompers Drill Team was a hit in the African American Heritage Parade, and has been invited to numerous competitions. Congratulations to the group's advisers, long time residents of the complex Cheryl Coxson and Karen Bailey!

Based on articles by Lori Coxson

2 Nevada St. Apartments

Nevada St. Apartments has undergone a number of capital improvements and repairs, including new tiles and repainted hallways, new chandeliers and light fixtures, reupholstered furniture in the community rooms, newly painted walls and new cabinets in the kitchen area. The parking lot was dug up and repaired, and a new entrance gate was installed. While a lot has been done, there remains a lot to do.

by Ann Davis



The St. James 440 Stompers. Their advisers are Cheryl Coxson and Karen Bailey.

Spruce Spires Apartments

Tenants at Spruce Spires worked together and got a written agreement from their management company that children will be able to use the fenced-in courtyard space for play, while their backyard playground area is under construction. The agreement allows children under 15 years old or younger to play in the courtyard area from 3 to 6 PM.

The agreement was the result of some hard work on the part of the Tenants Association, and their legal team from Essex Newark Legal Services.

"Children need places to play, and we were concerned about what our kids would do, since they were not able to use the playground," said Mark Green, President of the Resident Association, in discussing the ordinance.

Around Town

First Chancellor Apartments:

A Dream Deferred!

For years, First Chancellor Apartments, located in the cities South Ward, was home to many of the city's elite. Politicians, doctors, lawyers and business professionals reside in the 51 unit Garden Apartment.

In recent years the property has changed hands several times, contributing to its deteriorating state, says Debra Montgomery, a long time resident and member of the Greater Newark HUD Tenants' Coalition (GNHTC). During a recent snow storm, management failed to plow the building's parking lot, so residents were unable to move their cars. LLC Management Corporaiton has also privatized the lot by renting space to non-residents and charging tenants a \$25 monthly fee, whereas parking spaces originally came with the apartments without fees.

In recent months, there has been a lack of maintenance and exterminating resulting in rodent problems. Fire escape steps remain missing and/or broken, the electrical system is extremely dangerous, and residents run the risk of blowing out the entire building when using certain electrical appliances.

While Ms. Montgomery and other building activists are daunted by the challenges that lay before them, their resolve is to continue to fight. As Ms. Montgomery states, "If they (the management) think they can put fear in you, then that's what they will do. But we're committed to saving our homes and we will do whatever needs to be done to accomplish this."

by Donyale Ryan and Lori Coxson

469 Elizabeth Ave.

Elizabeth Ave. tenants are in court against their landlord for over over 200 violations. The Judge has imposed nearly \$40,000 in fines. The case is ongoing, with a possible receivership being established in this building.



Members of the Aspen Superkids preparing to march in the Portugal Day Parade. The Aspen Superkids Program is a monthly recreation program run by the Tenants Association, with help from St. Stephan's Church, Westfield United Church of Christ, and the Ironbound Community Corporation.

Lincoln Park Towers:

Who Will Protect Us?

Current housing laws do not require landlords and management agents of HUD subsidized properties to provide 24 hour security when there are fewer than 100 units on site.

Recently members of the Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, Councilmen Cory Booker and staff, met with the residents of Lincoln Park Towers to discuss their concerns about security. Residents feel that there should be 24 hour security measures in place. Councilman Booker said that he would contact the owner of the building to see if anything could be done. He also stated that "if necessary I will petition to have the law changed, because seniors should feel safe and confident that people are watching over them." The idea of video surveillance cameras was also discussed.

GNHTC believes the law should be changed so that senior buildings have 24 hour security.

based on an article by Donyale Ryan

Help Build Tenant Power In Newark!

The Coalition To Save Rent Control (CTSRC) & the HUD Tenants' Coalition have been volunteer organizations that help provide information on tenant rights and assists individual tenants in organizing their buildings. Clip this coupon and return it with any amount of money you can contribute to help continue this work.

☐ Here's my \$5 donation to this newsletter, keep it coming.

☐ I can't afford to subscribe, but keep me on the mailing list.

☐ Here's my subscription and a donation to help work for Tenant Awareness and Rights in Newark.

☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$25 ☐ other \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Checks should be made out to:

Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition
and sent to: 944 Broad St., Newark, N.J. 07102

Election Season Thought

A question tenants ask frequently: Why do large apartment complexes, which get state and/or federal subsidies, allow some candidates, but not all, to distribute or post their election material?

State officials have told HTC that the process is supposed to be fair to all candidates, and federal officials have said there should be no campaign material posted at all. Yet election after election, certain candidates get access, and others don't. Why?

Thank You!

Special thanks to: the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the VISTA Program, the IOLTA Fund, Essex Newark Legal Services, St. Stephan's United Church of Christ in Newark, the First Congregational United Church of Christ in Westfield, Ironbound Community Corporation, and the Claretian Fathers Social Justice Fund.

Newark Housing Authority Demolishes Hill Manor

by Donyale Ryan

Hill Manor remained vacant for years, waiting the wrecking ball. On December 9, 2000, at 9:00 AM the end came as dozens of strategically placed charges sent the 29 year-old, 420-unit complex crashing to the ground in a pile of rubble.

Federal, state, local officials, families and invited guests, gathered nearby in a heated banquet tent at the North east corner of West Kinney St. (once the site of the Prince St. Projects). The pre-implosion ceremony included Harold Lucas and Diane Johnson representing HUD, and Robert Graham and several other commissioners from the Newark Housing Authority. With much talk about past mistakes, and future development, 200 pounds of explosives sent the dream of Verdell Eure and Constance Brooks, former residents of Hill Manor, up in clouds of billowing dust.

Hill Manor, 21 stories high, was a moderate income building which opened in 1969 to much fanfare as affordable luxury living. With its spacious apartments and grand view of Manhattan, its downtown location was ideal, minutes from a train, plane or bus. However, over the years, due to inconsistencies in management companies, unaccountability for roles and responsibilities, accompanied with the lack of follow up and monitoring by Local, State and Federal Government Agencies, what once was a luxury complex became the dumping ground for many of society's ills. By the late 1980's, repairs were not made and tenants moved in without being screened. Drug trafficking became prevalent and residents had constant complaints about heat, hot water, and power. Frequent fires in the building knocked out elevator service.

On Jan. 4, 1994, a fire proved fatal for Irma Moore and Alfreda Smith when an incinerator fire interrupted electrical power to the elevators and hallway lights. Smith, a visitor to the building, suffered a heart attack after walking up 18 flights of stairs. Paramedics were delayed reaching her, due to the

broken elevators. On January 6th, Moore climbed the steps to her 10th floor apartment, where she suffered an asthma attack. Again, paramedics were delayed, and the mother of six died.

Verdell Eure was President of the Tenant Association, and Connie Brooks was Vice President. For years they fought HUD to keep the building open. For Eure, Hill Manor is a painful reminder of what could have been, had it been maintained. Brooks stated that, "They didn't keep up the maintenance, they used inferior products, and the property deteriorated."

Brooks' words are now being echoed by tenants of Brick Towers, a 2 building 16-story complex located 2 blocks away from Hill Manor. Despite the unwavering efforts of the residents, the complex remains in serious danger of being demolished. (see story on page 7).

Since 1988, HUD has allowed or approved the demolition of more than 7000 public housing units. If Brick Towers is demolished, it would further deplete the already scarce affordable housing stock.

In recent years, the City of Newark has demolished Scudder Homes (1440 units), Columbus Homes (1559 units), Archbishop Walsh Homes (294 units), Hill Manor (420), along with the impending implosion of Stella Wright Homes (1206 units).

Like a house of cards, Hill Manor fell in 12 seconds, while Verdell Eure and Constance Brooks watched from the crowd. The Housing Authority banner fluttered in the breeze. It reads, "Building Quality in Housing and Inspiring the Human Spirit."

Special thanks to Lori Coxson for production on this and several other articles appearing in this issue of Tenant Action News.



Resources

The following are available from the HUD Tenants' Coalition. To order, call 589-3353 or 643-7711:

* **Know Your Rights Fact Sheets.** These 2 fact sheets cover tenants rights on eviction, and most of the local ordinances in Newark. They are free.

* **Truth In Renting Law.** This booklet covers the state laws which apply to tenants. Available for its cost, \$1. It is also available in Spanish.

* **Knowing Where To Call.** A five page list of key phone numbers for tenants in Newark. Free *while they last*.

* **Recertification.** This booklet was developed for a workshop and includes a summary of common questions and important documents during your recertification process. \$1 for duplication.

* **M2M Fact Sheets & Brochure.** a must for tenants whose buildings are going through the Mark-To-Market Process.

* **Tenants Rights Manual: A Manual For Tenants Who Live in Privately Owned, Federally Subsidized Housing** (April 1992). This 161 book includes chapters on: HUD Housing Programs (definitions of terms of all major HUD-subsidized programs), Leases, Discrimination, Rents, Rent Increases, Tenant Organizing, Evictions, and many other topics. Copies are available from the Low Income Housing Information Service, 1012-14th St., N.W. Washington, DC 20005, (201) 662-1530. The cost is \$10 to members of LIHIS, \$20 to all others. Prepayment is required.

For Tenants Only!

Housing Is A Human Right Cablevision Show

Topics on "Housing Is A Human Right" have included: rent control laws, mark-to-market, resident complaints and how to get repairs made, and many others. Call the HUD Tenants Coalition at 643-7711 for upcoming program content and show times.

Numbers Every Tenant Should Know...

- Newark Rent Control Board
Staff, 733-3675
Administrator, 733-6684
Copies of rent control ordinance.
- Rutgers Urban Legal Clinic
15 Washington St.
353-5576
- Newark City Clerk's Office
733-3844 or 733-3669.
To find out about city ordinances.
- Landlord Tenant Court
693-6473
- Essex-Newark Legal Services
106 Halsey St.
624-4500
- Essex-Newark Legal Services
Senior Citizen Unit
672-3838, -3839, -3840, 3895.
- Rutgers Legal Aid Clinic
15 Washington St.
353-5576
- Newark Offices of Code Enforcement
733-6470, 733-8471, 733-6481
- Newark Municipal Council
733-3788
- * N.J. Transit (800) 772-2222
- * N.J. Legislative Bills Service
(800) 257-7490
- * Health & Senior Complaint Hotline
(800) 792-9770

Groups Working With Tenants

- * Coalition To Save Rent Control
Frank Hutchins, 643-7711
- * HUD Tenants' Coalition
Bill Good, Ann Davis, Frank Morris, Lori Coxson, Donyale Ryan, Michelle Hopkins, 643-7711, and Nancy Zak, 589-3353.

Brick Towers Fight Continues

Residents from Brick Towers, a 16 story building with 298 units, have formed a Resident Corporation Association, whose purpose is to find a developer who will renovate the property.

That's the latest in the battle to save the building. HUD had taken back the title of Brick Towers in February, 2000, by a deed in lieu of foreclosure, after having declared the buildings' owner in default due to numerous housing code violations and financial inproprieties.

In the fall of 2000, the owner, Meir Hertz was convicted of diverting \$1 million in federal funds earmarked for maintenance at the building for personal use. Mr. Hertz was sentenced to 3 years probation, two months in a half-way house, and fined \$21,725 in back taxes, and \$5000.

Federal officials who prosecuted the case said Hertz's conviction was a "landmark" step toward helping poor residents receive decent housing, and said the case was an example for operators of such housing developments.

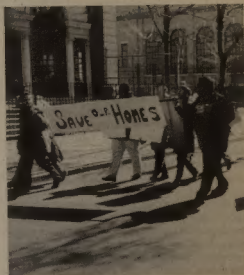
But Brick Towers residents were angry, and called for reparations to them for conditions under which they were forced to live.

"I don't think they gave him a stiff enough sentence," Jones said. "They should make him pay back every cent he stole. He's been stealing and stealing and we don't have anything."

Charlene Jackson, another resident, said HUD should be held accountable. "HUD owes us for putting us in this situation."

HUD officials have said that the conditions at Brick Towers are too costly to repair. But responding to the threatened demolition, residents raised money and hired an independent engineering firm to survey the building. The report found the building to be structurally sound, and financially viable.

Residents have held several large demonstrations at City Hall and HUD highlighting the issue, and have even gone to Washington D.C. to tell their story.



Brick Towers residents marching through downtown Newark to draw attention to the fate of their building.

Legal Cases Filed To Preserve Affordable Housing

The HUD Tenants' Coalition joined in a legal case filed against Applied Housing Management Co. Inc. This company received substantial tax benefits for voluntarily entering into a state program in 1975 to provide affordable housing. While the legislature specifically stated these properties should provide affordable housing for 50 years, Applied Housing recently deregulated 80% of their apartments, which can now be rented at market rates of more than \$1300 for a one-bedroom apartment.

HTC is also watching with interest a case filed on behalf of tenants in Zion Towers challenging the annual rent increase in their building. One of the points in the legal case is that the reasons for the rent increase are not clearly or thoroughly spelled out in the communications to residents.

Washington Dodd: A Success Story For HUD Subsidized Housing

by Donyale Ryan

Washington Dodd Apartments maintains the look of a sprawling suburban neighborhood. It's 250 units of 2 and 3 bedroom garden apartments are located in Orange, New Jersey, bordered by the towns of Montclair and Glen Ridge. It's community is composed of diverse ethnic groups. With the help of the Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition (GNHTC) Washington Dodd continues to be a shining success story of HUD subsidized housing.

In 1996, the owners of Washington Dodd decided to "opt-out", and sell the property, however as a BMIR financed development, with an FHA secured mortgage. HUD would retain the right to set rental policy. In an unprecedented move to help residents understand their rights, the NJ Department of Community Affairs issued a grant to educate the residents. The facilitator for a series of workshops for residents was HTC's Mr. Bill Good., a housing organizer for many years. When asked what problems were encountered at the development, Mr. Good was quick to respond, "Getting management and tenants to work together and re-certification were our two biggest issues," he said. "With management and tenant relationships, trust must be built between the two. What was helpful was HUD reaching out to a community organization like ours to bring us into the project, and supporting us with the money to do it."

Recently, Washington Dodd elected its new Tenant Association Executive Board. They are: Rhonda Barnett as President, Richard Allston as Vice President, and Amara Muhammad as Secretary. The building is managed by Corcoran Jennison Management Company and owned by the NAP Foundation.

The Washington Dodd Tenant Association produces a newsletter, called *Washington Dodd News and Notes*. Currently several services are available on site. They are: Girl Scouts of America, an Afterschool Program, Senior Coffee Hour, Computer Training Center, and a social worker on call.



Washington Dodd's new Executive Board gets sworn in by Frank Hutchins: left to right, Vice President Richard Allston, President, Rhonda Barnett, and Secretary, Amara Muhammad.

For further information about Washington Dodd ou can reach Bill Good at the Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition, phone 973-643-7711, fax, 973-643-0099, and email latnwkhudtc@bellatlantic.net.

Relocation Problems At Stella Wright

The Newark Housing Authority received a \$35 million federal grant to demolish Stella Wright. Once home to 800 families, sections of the building had been emptied. The remaining families found that bad planning and bad information turned what could have been a move to a better place into an emergency nightmare.

On Sept. 22, 2000, the Newark Housing Authority stunned residents with the news that they would have to be out by Thanksgiving, despite the fact that the Housing Authority had known for more than 18 months that relocation would be necessary. By forcing it on the residents as an emergency move, the tenants have no say so as to where they go.

Continued on page 11

Mark To Market Update

Eighteen buildings have currently entered New Jersey's Mark To Market (M2M) Program.

When the Federal Government provided housing for low income families they paid private landlords subsidies to operate the buildings. The subsidies make up the difference between what tenants pay for rent (the tenants share) and the total rent charged for the unit. Over the years, the rents charged were increased until they were higher than what could be realistically charged in the open market.

Today, many subsidy contracts are ending. Congress established the Mark to Market Program to preserve these buildings as affordable housing by lowering the cost of renewing the subsidies. The M2M Program applies to all multifamily buildings with project-based subsidies that are about to expire. The M2M program lets HUD renew subsidies for up to 20 years, and if necessary restructure ("mark") the building's rents to the market rent. Some buildings such as elderly building will get their subsidy contracts renewed no matter what.

Not all the buildings will get subsidies renewed. Renewal of the subsidy is complicated and will vary from building to building. Owners cannot be forced to renew the subsidy. They can "opt out" of the program.

The HUD Tenants' Coalition has received a grant from the Department of Housing & Urban Development to provide assistance to residents in these buildings.

Each building which is in the M2M Program is assigned to a Participating Administrative Entity (PAE). This is a company or government agency hired by HUD to review the information about particular buildings, and present a plan for the future. The PAE is responsible for notifying tenants and involving them in the required meetings, and soliciting their oral and written comments.

Tenants have the right to participate in an initial meeting, and to see documents and make comments to the PAE about the plans. Tenant participation is important because it is the only way to make sure that the building is evaluated fairly. Tenants can convince

an owner to renew his subsidy, can help get added funding to make repairs as part of the renewal process, help identify eligible purchasers, help force a not-so-good owner out of the process.

Around the country tenants in "troubled" properties have been disappointed in M2M because the Mark-To-Market time frame is very short, and tenant recommendations are being ignored. In one building in Pennsylvania, tenants recommended that a new owner and manager be put in place. Instead HUD kept the current owner and manager. "When we first attended the Mark To Market meetings, we hoped that the program would improve communications between residents and HUD and would change conditions in our housing," said Ms. Charles, a member of the Tenant Association in that building. By keeping the same owner, "it meant continued problems for us the residents and the surrounding community."

The Mark-To-Market Task Force of the National Alliance of HUD Tenants (with HTC as a part) is working on ways to improve the program. HTC has also had to deal with PAEs who are not following the regulations. In a letter to HUD, Frank Hutchins talked about a number of buildings where letters went to tenants without any address as to where comments should be directed, where meeting times were not in the letter, where copies were not sent to the right places, and where information tenants should be able to see was not provided.

"If you live in an M2M building, or have a building whose subsidy contract will be expiring in the near future, now is the time to contact the HUD Tenants Coalition, and get the information you need to proceed. Don't wait until the last minute," says Bill Good, HTC organizer.

HTC has an M2M brochure available. You can reach HTC at (973) 643-7711.

Information in this article is based on a recent article in National Tenant Voice, published by the National Alliance of HUD Tenants, and "What Tenants Need to Know About the Mark To Market Program," a brochure developed by Essex Newark Legal Services, and available through the HUD Tenants Coalition.

Frank Hutchins: The Best Is Yet To Come

Editor's note: Frank Hutchins, Chairperson for the HUD Tenants' Coalition, recently applied for a grant for a sabbatical. Frank did not receive the grant, and members of HTC decided to throw a breakfast in Frank's honor to raise the money instead. Although the breakfast was held, Frank has not yet taken a sabbatical. Below is an article describing the event, which became a well-deserved testimonial to Frank.

by Harriet Aschoff

A long banner was stretched across the banquet room stage in the Prince Hall grand Lodge. It read "Frank Hutchins, The Best Is Yet To Come." Tables to the left and right of the stage were slowly filling up with Mr. Hutchins' family and long time friends and associates who had been gathering outside. "A special event for a genuine person" would start with prayer, a welcome, music and breakfast.

A black and silver theme set the tone for the breakfast event. Programs, tickets, and place settings were black and silver. Bouquets of silver and black balloons on our tables floated as high as they could while anchored in place by weights covered with replicas of tuxedo jacket cut-outs. In contrast were the outfits of the guests, but Frank, the honored guest with a big smile, was in sync. He wore white.

It was already hot in the Saturday morning sun. The cool, dimly lit hall was ideal to continue the schmoozing that had begun outside. Unsettled guests sat behind either the Reverends and their families on the left side of the large banquet room, or on the right with Frank and his family. Reverend Pearman opened with a prayer, and Reverend Coles, Jr. delivered a sermon on service.

During my breakfast of eggs, bacon, fresh fruit, grits and coffee, and the over 3 hour program, I learned that this hall and Frank has a long history. Mr. Zisman told me he had been sent to this very hall to learn Hebrew 70 years ago. Associations of Frank's for as many as 30 years referred to him as a community leader, advisor, and visionary. Two women at my table for instance knew Frank for 20 to 30 years as a supporter for day care and life member of the First Baptist Church in Nutley, New Jersey. My own



Frank Hutchins, shown with Board President Cynthia Pullen, and Richard Cammarieri.

association with Frank has been in his capacity as a tenant leader.

Remarks from Dr. Mary Frazier, Frank's sister, took us back to her brother's childhood. "Frank's vision and leadership qualities were evident very early." Since childhood Frank saw how he could improve the lives of his friends and neighborhood. Idle young boys should have something to do (he got a boy scout troop started). A dirty street should be kept clean (he approached a rich resident for assistance).

This event was held 2 weeks before Father's Day. Councilman Cory Booker told us, "Frank's influence on my life has been as a son and father. He has helped me make tough decisions regarding my life and career." Nancy Zak, active in maintaining tenant rights and affordable housing, remarked, "No matter how bleak any tenant situation became, Frank never faltered in his belief. Frank keeps us going. He's truly my hero."

Unsure of what to expect when I came, I was one of the last guests to leave the hall. I was feeling how much this man had touched the lives of everyone who attended and participated. I had watched closely as Frank personally acknowledged everyone who spoke on his behalf. I carefully read the souvenir program amazed at the

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Tougher No-Heat Law Passes With Tenant Support

Under a law introduced by Councilman Cory Booker, and supported by the HUD Tenants' Coalition, the City of Newark's Code Enforcement Department will be able to fix a boiler or order oil for a building, if the heat in the building has been off for more than 12 hours, and the landlord has failed to take action to correct the problem.

The law also says a landlord can be fined \$300 for each rental unit without heat, and a landlord who has been convicted twice within 6 months of a violation of the no-heat section.

The Best Is Yet To Come

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countless number of organizations where Frank volunteered, directed and otherwise participated as a "warrior for the people" to fight on behalf of children, seniors and tenant families.

In his delivery, Rev. Coles, Jr. said, "Frank's whole life has been one of service to God, family, neighbors and Newark." We know Frank was due in Washington DC immediately after the breakfast to join Newark tenants already there on a mission. Any sabbatical Frank ever takes will undoubtedly be used to think about what to tackle next.

Stella Wright

continued from page 9

Housing Authority officials have been criticized in hearings before US District Judge Dickinson DeBevoise for failing to properly counsel tenants about their permanent housing choices, in helping them find a home most suited to their needs. At the most recent hearing, in US District Court, Ann Russ, an independent consultant with the Cambridge, Massachusetts based ABT associates, assigned to oversee the Stella Wright redevelopment effort, questioned the authority's ability to counsel tenants about relocation. These hearings are part of an ongoing 11 year-old settlement to replace razed family high rises in Newark. Russ suggested to Judge DeBevoise that the Authority seek outside assistance in counseling tenants.



A Special Thank You

Lori Outz Borgen, a lawyer with Gibbons Del Deo, who worked pro bono with the HUD Tenants' Coalition on a number of issues recently relocated and took another job. All the tenants at HTC thank Lori for the work she did during her time at Gibbons Del Deo.



HTC Delegation To NAHT Conference

HTC's 13 member delegation to the NAHT Conference last June included. (left to right, back row) Lori Coxson, Ann Scott, Robert Brown, Phil Grate, Elaine Sewell, Martha Edwards; (left to right, middle) Ann Davis, Dottie Tutt, Jeanette Miller; Donyale Ryan in front.

NJ's Rents Are The Most Expensive In The Nation!

New Jersey has achieved the alarming distinction of being the nation's least affordable state in which to rent an apartment, according to the recently released *Out of Reach Report*, issued by the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

The report confirms what many people already know: low-wage earners are struggling to afford the rent while paying for other basic life necessities.

According to the report, workers would have to earn \$16.88 per hour to pay for an average apartment. Employees earning the federal minimum wage cannot afford a modest 2-bedroom apartment in any New Jersey county, without working the equivalent of three full time jobs.

The average rent in Essex County for a 2-bedroom apartment is \$872 a month. The annual income needed to pay for this would be \$34,880. 43% of the current population here cannot afford that kind of rent.

The Housing & Community Development Network of New Jersey is working on a tax-credit bill which will help to provide and preserve affordable rental housing. For information, or to find out the status of the bill, or how you can help get it passed, contact the Network at (609) 393-3752.

Newark's Partnership For Lead Safe Children

The Partnership for Lead Safe Children has been working hard to eliminate the problem of lead poisoning in Newark's children.

The Partnership has been presenting workshops on lead safety to various groups.

They also have many printed materials about lead poisoning prevention available.

For more information, contact Lon Coxson, at the Greater Newark Area HUD Tenants Coalition office, (973) 643-7711.

In My Opinion

by Frank Hutchins

Now is the time to organize and build strong coalitions and advocacy groups. The recent presidential election brought in a new administration, and with it a number of uncertainties. President George W. Bush, the son of the former President Bush, brings a great deal of concern to the poor and middle class. We must view all parties with a jaundiced eye. We cannot waiver in our support for our best interest. According to the experts we had a sound economy (even though, those of us who are on the bottom of the ladder might disagree). But in the first 100 days it seems that problems with the economy began.

We are also witnessing that the government seems hell bent on tearing down buildings that are structurally sound. There seems to be a feeling that high rise structures are not a viable answer to families with low income. I wonder why they work so well in New York City. The public housing complexes in Manhattan are in much better condition than those in Newark. Why?

Stella Wright is slated to be demolished (I must admit it was in a serious state of disrepair). But when was this decision made? It seems that there were several million dollars spent on gates that surround this property. Why spend this kind of money on property that you intend to demolish? In the case of Hill Manor Apartments, there was an enormous expenditure before it was torn down. Who makes the plans that are responsible for this wasteful spending? Why is there no thought given to or input taken from the people who are displaced? Why do we always accept the fact that the tenants are blamed for the destruction of the property? Why can't management design a successful tenant selection policy? These are some questions that we must seek answers to.

Finally, we must remember that we have work to do. We must organize. We must constantly register ourselves to vote, and we must organize our buildings and communities. "No one can ride your back unless it's bent."

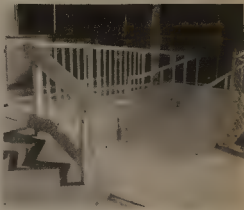
Shalom-Clemente Towers Victory!

by Donyale Ryan

After a long battle, Shalom-Clemente Towers Tenants Association realized the fruits of its two year struggle to make its building handicapped accessible. The number of people with disabilities is growing. Recent census results document that over a million people in the United States have severe disabilities.

Shalom-Clemente Towers is a twelve (12) story 168 unit complex that was built more than 25 years ago, and many of its original residents continue to reside there. Over the years, some residents have suffered from declining health and many are forced to use wheelchairs, canes and walkers. Medical advances have enabled people with disabilities to live longer and be more integrated members of the community. People with disabilities want to be active and independent members of the society and are entitled to safe, decent, and affordable housing. During 1999, the U.S. Supreme Court's Olstead decision affirmed the right of people with disabilities to do just that, live independently. Now, more than ever before, people with disabilities hope to live in the community and adapt their living quarters to better meet their needs, not their support needs (home care services) but their physical needs as well. Shalom-Clemente Towers Tenants Association filed its complaint with the state attorney general's office on December 12, 1999, after Marzulli Realty failed to respond to resident concerns.

Donyale, S. Ryan, president of the Tenants Association, is philosophical about the building manager Marzulli's forced compliance. "Our battle to get him (Marzulli) to comply speaks volumes as to the mind set of owners and managers like him. A myriad of laws and regulations exist that govern the process which dictates who is responsible for making accessibility modifications, and how the cost of these modifications are covered, but despite these laws, progress has been slow, due to lack of enforcement of fair housing laws. Therefore management agents like Mr. Marzulli will ignore basic realities concerning long term residents and their changing health condition," he said. "Our experience has been that whenever our manager submits requests for rent increases, they are under the guise of capital improve-



The Tenants Association won installation of ramps for disabled residents at Shalom-Clemente Towers.

ments which didn't encompass the real needs of the residents. However, with the hard work of our Disabilities Committee, and the support of the residents, we were able to make compliance a reality.

Mr. Ryan went on to say that "not all managers and owners resist," and acknowledged SHP Management firm, as one example of a company that acted judiciously to make 2 Nevada St. Apartments accessible to its physically challenged residents without court action.

"As Newark moves forward, so must it's residents," said Mr. Ryan. "If in wheelchairs, or on canes or walkers, people must be able to meet the able bodied on a playing field that conveys our wisdom, compassion and understanding of a future that could be our own. The National Alliance of HUD Tenants (NAHT) and the Greater Newark HUD Tenants Coalition (GNHTC) will review HUD buildings to insure that they meet all ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) specifications."

"If your building is not handicapped accessible, call the GNHTC at (973) 643-7711 or send your questions to 944 Broad St., Newark, 07102, attention Donyale S. Ryan



La Pintura a Base de Plomo es Tóxica: ¿Está en Riesgo Su Familia?



U.S. Department of
Housing and Urban
Development

**EL DEPARTAMENTO DE VIVIENDA Y DESARROLLO URBANO
DE LOS ESTADOS UNIDOS (HUD) QUIERE QUE USTED CONOZCA
LOS PELIGROS DE LA PINTURA A BASE DE PLOMO.**

P. ¿En qué lugares hay pintura a base de plomo?

R. La mayoría de las casas construidas antes de 1978 contienen pintura a base de plomo. Las casas construidas antes de 1960 son las que más tienen pintura a base de plomo. Puede haber plomo en cualquier superficie pintada, pero es más común encontrarlo en ventanas, marcos de ventanas, puertas, barandales, columnas, pórticos y en paredes exteriores. Aquellas superficies que han sido pintadas varias veces pueden contener plomo en las primeras capas de pintura, es decir las más antiguas. Una inspección de plomo puede informarle en qué lugares de su casa hay plomo.

P. ¿Cómo se pueden envenenar los niños con pinturas a base de plomo?

R. La mayoría de los casos de niños envenenados con plomo proviene del polvo casi invisible que se desprende de la pintura que se está pelando o despegando. Este polvo se asienta en los pisos y en otras superficies de la casa, de donde fácilmente llega a manos de los niños, a sus juguetes y de allí a la boca. Los niños también pueden envenenarse cuando juegan en patios y pisos de tierra que pueden contener plomo de la pintura que se ha pelado de las paredes exteriores, o de residuos de gasolina con plomo que se usaba anteriormente, así como de otras fuentes contaminantes.

P. ¿Debo preocuparme por el plomo si estoy remodelando o pintando mi casa de nuevo?

R. Sí. El raspar, lijarse u otros trabajos sobre pintura vieja pueden remover grandes cantidades de polvo que contiene plomo. Es importante aprender a observar ciertas medidas de seguridad cuando se trabaja con pintura a base de plomo y asegurarse que el personal de trabajo que contrate siga las reglas de seguridad al respecto. Para más información diríjase a la hoja informativa de HUD titulada la pintura a base de plomo es tóxica. Proteja a su familia cuando pinte o remodele su casa. Para obtener una copia gratis, llame al 1-800-424-LEAD, personal de habla hispana le atenderá.

P. ¿Cómo puedo saber si mi hijo se ha envenenado con plomo?

R. No es posible saberlo con solamente observar a su niño. La única manera de saberlo es a través de un examen de sangre. Es un examen sencillo y rápido que se puede hacer en cualquier consultorio médico o clínica. El examen es gratis, si tiene seguro médico privado o si está cubierto por el gobierno. Nadie será rechazado por falta de dinero.

P. ¿Qué puedo hacer si mi hijo se ha envenenado con plomo?

R. Primero identifique en su casa cualquier fuente de contaminación con plomo e informese como eliminarla sin riesgo. Consulte a su doctor o con el Departamento de Salud sobre qué otras cosas puede hacer para proteger la salud de los niños. Nunca intente o permita que otro lo haga. Llame a 1-888-LEADUST, no es disponible en español para obtener una lista de los proveedores de este servicio.

P. ¿Si vivo en un hogar alquilado, cómo puedo proteger a mi familia?

R. Hay cinco cosas que usted debe saber:

1. El propietario es responsable de mantener la pintura en buena condición.
2. Llame al Departamento de Salud si el propietario no repara la pintura que está despegada o dañada por la humedad.
3. Asegúrese que el personal de trabajo que esté arreglando su casa maneje con cuidado el polvo que contiene plomo.
4. Los trabajadores deben limpiar bien el área cuando terminan la obra.
5. El propietario tiene la obligación legal de informarle acerca del plomo, antes de firmar el contrato de alquiler o en cualquier ocasión en que le aumente la renta.

- Si su casa fue construida antes de 1978, sus niños podrían estar en riesgo de envenenamiento con plomo.
- El plomo puede ocasionar daño cerebral en los niños causando problemas irreversibles de aprendizaje y de comportamiento.
- En los Estados Unidos, casi un millón de niños menores de seis años sufren de envenenamiento con plomo.
- El grupo de mayor riesgo son los niños menores de seis años.
- Si la madre ha sido expuesta al plomo durante su embarazo, esto podría causarle daño al bebé.

Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD: Organizando Con Inquilinos

"Este grupo esta manteniendo inquilinos informados acerca de lo que esta pasando y sabiendo de cosas es el primer paso para involucrarse uno, participar y hacer cambios"

Esto es lo que dijo un inquilino recientemente acerca del Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD (HTC), el grupo que organiza a inquilinos en edificios de dueños privados que reciben asistencia gubernamental en Newark.

Algunas de las cosas que HTC ha hecho incluye

- * Patrocinando foros acerca de los cambios a leyes federales de vivienda y trabajando con inquilinos de Newark para diseñar una estrategia para preservar vivienda de bajos ingresos

- * Foros Regionales con oficinas locales y federales de HUD, patrocinado con inquilinos del estado de Nueva York

- * Reuniones con el Director de New Jersey Mortgage Finance Agency y los oficiales del estado, enfocandose en regulaciones del incremento de renta que estan teniendo un impacto negativo a residentes

Mas importante, HTC ha estado trabajando y aconsejando a inquilinos alrededor de la ciudad y atendiendo muchas reuniones HTC esta asistiendo a residentes que estan organizando muy bien en sus edificios. Los trabajadores de HTC estan presentemente enfocandose en edificios en todos los secciones de la ciudad de Newark

HTC ha crecido de 8 edificios de apartamentos a 30 edificios de alrededor de la ciudad que ahora son miembros



Como se hace uno miembro?

Miembros individuales \$5 00,

Miembros del edificios \$25

Haga el cheque a

Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD

(marque el cheque: *for membership dues*)
y mandelo a

944 Broad St
Newark NJ 07102

Para mas información llame a. (201) 643-7711 o
643-7712

Que obtiene si se hace miembro de HTC

HTC ayuda a organizaciones de inquilinos.

- ♦ ayudar a iniciarse y seguir siendo efectivo (escribir las reglas de la organización, tener elecciones, etc)
- ♦ reuniones mensuales para compartir estrategias
- ♦ Noticias de Acción de Inquilinos - el unico periodico para inquilinos
- ♦ ayudar en luchar contra el hostigamiento de dueños, incremento de renta ilegales, etc.
- ♦ talleres en la escuela de leyes Seton Hall

Inquilinos Tienen El Derecho A Organizarse!

Usted sabe que tiene el derecho a organizar a inquilinos en su edificio sin intervención?

Como uno de los resultados de los Foros Regionales, HUD mando varias cartas a los encargados y dueños de edificios de apartamentos acerca de los derechos que tienen los inquilinos a organizar. Una carta mandada en Noviembre de 1996 de Chris Greer dice:

"HUD tienen la expectación que los dueños y agentes encargados deben crear buenas relaciones entre residentes, buenos y encargados. La participación y cooperación es importante en crear un ambiente apropiado para vivir y puede contribuir a una operación exitosa de estas propiedades..."

La carta continua diciendo que:

- * Dueños tienen que proveer un espacio accesible para reuniones en el edificio para que asociaciones de residentes legítimas puedan tener reuniones.

- * Dueños y encargados no pueden mandar representantes de los encargados del edificio a reuniones de los inquilinos cuando no se les a pedido que atiendan.

- * El desplazo hostigamiento ó el castigamiento de residentes que organizan ó que exigen sus derechos no es permitido.

- * Tratar de influenciar a líderes de inquilinos ofreciendo favores a individuos como empleo, preferencia para trasladar, reducción de renta, reparos especiales ó otros beneficios no disponibles a todos no es permitido.

- * Hostigamiento sexual no es permitido.

Leyes estatales en New Jersey tambien dicen que no puede usted ser desplazado por organizar una asociación de inquilinos ó por trabajar para mejorar las condiciones en su edificio.

Un folleto acerca de los derechos de inquilinos debe ser proveido cada año a los

inquilinos por los dueños ó encargados en el idioma los inquilinos hablan: Este folleto debe ser dado cuando el contrato es firmado ó en la entrevista de recertificación. Usted esta recibiendo el suyo?



Pensamiento de la Temporada de Elección

Una pregunta que inquilinos frecuentemente preguntan: Porque edificios de apartamentos grandes, que obtienen asistencia del gobierno estatal y/o federal, permiten a algunos candidatos, pero no a todos distribuir ó colgar material de sus elecciones?

Oficiales estatales le han dicho a HTC que el proceso debe ser justo para todos los candidatos y oficiales federales han dicho que no debe ver material de campaña colgado. Pero durante elecciones en el pasado, algunos candidatos han obtenido acceso y otros no. Porque?

Que Debemos Hacer

Abajo ahí secciones de un discurso dado por Cynthia Pullen, miembro de la mesa directiva de Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD. Este discurso se dio en un taller acerca de los cambios gubernamentales a las leyes federales acerca de la vivienda:

Quando uno escucha acerca de lo que esta pensando hacer el Congreso Federal a leyes de vivienda, puede preguntarse que podemos hacer? Pero este no es el tiempo de no hacer nada. Quando personas estan desesperadas, tienen que salir luchando. Aquí estan algunas cosas que debemos hacer:

1) Organizar!

2) Registrarse para votar y votar inteligente. Debe saber usted cuales son las posiciones de la persona acerca de temas de vivienda.

3) Si los politicos elegidos hacen promesas haga que los cumplan.

4) Unese a otros grupos de inquilinos por medio del HTC.

5) Pongase en la mesa donde se hacen las decisiones. Incremente nuestros numeros. Eso incrementa nuestro poder y nuestras voces.

6) Este informada acerca de leyes de vivienda. Atienda talleres para escuchar acerca de nuevas regulaciones y cambios. Lea acerca de esto.

7) Escriba cartas al editor de periodicos locales para que el pueblo entero vea que la falta de vivienda de bajos ingresos es un problema. Debemos hacer que nuestras preocupaciones sean las de la sociedad.

8) Educar a otros. Compartir información con inquilinos que usted conoce. Hablar con personas puerta a puerta. Hable con otros en su edificio, los grupos de padres y su iglesia.

9) Tenga reuniones cara a cara con legisladores para que se den cuentan que sus decisiones afectan a personas reales.

10) Comuniquese con elegidos politicos. Aseguerese que nuestros temas sean parte de sus agendas.

11) Incremente nuestros esfuerzos para que el trabajo de HTC pueda continuar.

12) Hable acerca de nuestras exitos. Quando ganamos una lucha, cuando hacemos progreso, deje que lo podamos promover.

13) Haga que los dueños y encargados de nuestros edificios los mantengan en buenas condiciones.

14) Organize, organize, organize!

Essex Newark Servicios Legales
624-4500

Rutgers Urban Clinica Legal
353-5576

Rutgers Clinica de Ayuda Legal
353-5576

HUD Tenants' Coalition
643-7711

Ciudad de Newark
Junta de Rentas Controladas
733-3675
Coacción Codigo
733-6471
Ayuda de Calificación
733-6471, 6481

Cambios del Programa Mark to Market (M2M)

Dieciocho edificios han entrado ya en el Programa de New Jersey llamado Mark to Market(M2M).

Cuando el Gobierno Federal proveyó alojamiento para las familias de pocos ingresos, pagaron a los propietarios subsidios para operar sus edificios. Los subsidios hacen la diferencia entre lo que los inquilinos pagan de renta y el precio de la renta total que se carga por unidad. A través de los años, las rentas cargadas han subido hasta que eran mas altas de lo que realísticamente se cargaban en el mercado.

Hoy, muchos de los subsidios de contratos se están acabando. El Congreso estableció el Programa Mark to Market (M2M) para preservar estos edificios como alojamiento al alcance de las familias bajando el coste de renovar los subsidios. El Programa M2M aplica a todos los edificios de varias familias con subsidios basados en proyectos que están a punto de expirar. El Programa M2M permite a HUD renovar subsidios hasta a 20 años y si es necesario, reestructurar las rentas de los edificios al valor de las rentas actuales. Algunos edificios, como los más antiguos, conseguirán los contratos de los subsidios pase lo que pase. No todos los edificios conseguirán renovar sus subsidios. La renovación de los subsidios es complicada y variara de edificio a edificio. No se puede forzar a los propietarios a que renueven el subsidio. Pueden salirse del Programa.

La Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD ha recibido una cesión del Departamento de Alojamiento y Desarrollo Urbano para proveer asistencia a los residentes de estos edificios.

Cada edificio que esta en el Programa M2M es asignado a una Entidad Administrativa Participante(PAE), esto es una compañía o agencia de gobierno pagada por HUD para revisar la información



sobre ciertos edificios y también presentar un plan para el futuro. La PAE es responsable de notificar a los inquilinos y enrollarles en las reuniones necesarias; así como solicitar comentarios escritos y orales.

Los inquilinos tienen el derecho de participar en una reunión inicial y también de ver los documentos y hacer comentarios a la PAE sobre los planes. La participación de los inquilinos es importante porque es la única manera de asegurarse de que los edificios sean evaluados justamente. Los inquilinos pueden convencer a un propietario a renovar su subsidio, pueden ayudar a conseguir fondos adicionales para hacer arreglos como parte del proceso de renovación, pueden ayudar a identificar posibles compradores y pueden forzar a un propietario, no muy bueno, fuera del proceso.

En todo el país, inquilinos en propiedades difíciles están decepcionados del Programa M2M porque el tiempo designado para el M2M es muy corto y las recomendaciones de los inquilinos se están ignorando. En un edificio en Pensylvania, los inquilinos recomendaron que un propietario y un

cont. p.19

Rentas de NJ Son Las Mas Caras En El Pais!

New Jersey ha obtenido la alarmante distinción de ser el estado menos accesible en donde se pueda rentar un apartamento en el país, según el "Reporte Afuera de Alcance" publicado recientemente por la Coalición Nacional de Vivienda de Bajos Ingresos.

El reporte confirma lo que mucha gente ya saben: Personas que ganan bajos ingresos están luchando para poder ajustar su renta mientras pagan por sus otras necesidades básicas.

Según el reporte, trabajadores tuvieran que ganar \$16.88 por hora para pagar por un apartamento basado en el promedio costo. Empleados ganando el salario mínimo federal no pueden ajustar para un apartamento modesto de 2 recamaras en cualquier condado de New Jersey, sin tener que trabajar lo equivalente de tres trabajos de tiempo completo.

El promedio de renta en el Condado de Essex para un apartamento de dos recamaras es \$872 por mes. El ingreso anual necesario para pagar por esto sería \$34,880. 43% de la población actual no puede ajustar ese tipo de renta.

La Red de Desarrollo de Vivienda y Comunidad de New Jersey está trabajando en una propuesta legislativa de crédito de impuesto que ayudaría a proveer y preservar vivienda de bajos ingresos. Para información, para darse cuenta del estatus de esta propuesta legislativa ó como puede ayudar que se apruebe llame a la Red al (609) 393-3752.



M2M

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administrador nuevo sean instalados. En vez de eso HUD siguió con el propietario actual y con su administrador. "Cuando primero asistimos a las reuniones de Mark to Market, esperábamos que el programa mejoraría las comunicaciones entre los residentes y HUD y que cambiaría las condiciones de nuestro alojamiento," dijeron Ms. Charles, un miembro de la Asociación de Inquilinos en aquel edificio. Siguiendo con el mismo propietario, "significo una continuación de los problemas para nosotros los residentes y para la comunidad vecindaria."

La cuadrilla de Mark-To-Market de la Alianza Nacional de los Inquilinos de HUD (con HTC como parte) está trabajando en maneras de mejorar el programa HTC. HTC ha tenido también que negociar con los de PAE que no siguen las reglas. En una carta a HUD, Frank Hutchins habla de varios edificios donde cartas fueron a los inquilinos sin la dirección donde los comentarios podrían mandarse, donde las horas de las reuniones no estaban en las cartas, donde copias no se mandaron a las direcciones adecuadas, y donde la información que los inquilinos debieron de ver no fue proveída.

"Si usted vive en un edificio M2M o tiene un edificio cuyo contrato de subsidio se va a expirar pronto, ahora es cuando debe de ponerse en contacto con La Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD y obtener la información que necesita para continuar. No espere hasta la última hora," dijo el organizador de HTC, Bill Good.

HTC tiene un boletín sobre M2M a su disposición. Puede contactar HTC (973) 643-7711.

La información de este artículo está basada en un artículo reciente de Nacional Tenant Óbice, publicado por la Alianza de Inquilinos de HUD y en "What Tenants Need to Know About de Mark To Market Program," un boletín desarrollado por Essex Newark Legal Services y disponible a través de la Coalición de Inquilinos de HUD.